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BOOK REVIEWS.

THE LAW AND CUSTOM OF THE CONSTITUTION. By Sir William R. Anson.
Vol. I., Parliament. London: Stevens & Sons, Limited. 1911.

The fourth edition of the first volume of this standard work, published in 1909, has been re-issued in a revised form so as to include the momentous constitutional changes of the past year; particularly those introduced by the Parliament bill of 1911 (1 & 2 Geo. V., ch. 13). By this act the House of Lords is deprived of all control over money bills, which, if not passed by the lords, may be presented without their concurrence for royal approval. Other public bills passed by the House of Commons in three successive sessions and rejected by the lords in each session, may become law without the assent of the lords, provided two years have elapsed between the date of second reading in the first session and final passage in the third session. A promise of a new second chamber on a popular instead of hereditary basis is held out in the preamble to the act. But these are by no means all of the innovations that have disturbed the even course of the ancient parliamentary procedure. The duration of parliament has been reduced to five years; the members are now paid annual salaries of £400; while the drastic method of limiting debate, known as "the guillotine," by which discussion, whether concluded or not, is closed automatically at fixed periods, has notably increased the control of the ministry over the business of Parliament, strengthened party machinery and discouraged independent action by private members.

Without disturbing the existing arrangement of the text, the learned author has deftly interwoven a lucid account of the new legislation, which can hardly be said, as yet, to have passed beyond the experimental stage, and which is still the subject of bitter political controversy. The author while loyally discreet in his discussion of the pledge to make peers, secretly exacted of the King in November, 1910, by the Liberal ministry clearly indicates his distaste for this discreditable proceeding. And indeed to the unbiased outsider the conduct of the ministry on this occasion is impossible to justify either by constitutional precedent or the principles of common fairness. Certainly those who profess to believe in popular government should be the last to hide from the Opposition and the electorate the conditions upon which an election is to be fought, and to seek a return to the back-stairs politics of the Eighteenth Century.

To an American, accustomed to outbreaks of hysteria over even a suggestion of constitutional innovation, the British public seems singularly calm as to the kaleidoscopic changes of the recent past. Perhaps it is that Christian resignation often noticed in the desperately ill person—the growling will occur during convalescence. In the meantime we may go to this book for a temperate and scholarly discussion of parliamentary institutions as they exist today, exhibiting as they do a shifting of the balance of political forces, the outcome of which no man knoweth.

W. H. L.

THE CLOSED SHOP IN AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS. By Frank T. Stockton,
Ph. D., Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1911.

A critical examination of the problem discussed in this book, is of vital interest to the lawyer of today in view of the fact that the branch of the law which deals with it is considered by most jurists to be in its formative period. Continuous and hard-fought litigation on such questions tends to